

REMARKS

OVERVIEW

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application. Claims 1-7, 15-18, 20 and 22 have been allowed. Claims 8, 10, 11, 19, 23 and 25 have been rejected and claims 9, 12-14, 20 and 24 have been objected to as depending upon a rejected base claim. Claim 23 has been amended and claim 24 has been cancelled. The present response is an earnest effort to overcome all rejections such that the Examiner will find all claims in proper form for immediate allowance.

INFORMALITY ISSUES

Claim 23 was objected to because of improper antecedent basis. Claim 23 has been amended to place this in proper form for allowance.

ISSUES UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 8, 10-11 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Baltz et al.

The Applicants claimed structure in independent claims 8 and 19 patentably differs from Baltz. Specifically, Applicants claim 8 requires a "leading edge having an angled member that angles away from the discharge opening and the granular material within the hopper, wherein the weight force of the granular material engages the angled member during movement of the gate from the closed position to the open position". As used in this claim, the open position includes the partially open position of the gate immediately after the closed position. The primary benefit of having an angled leading edge is to assist in the initial opening of the hopper closure door from when the door is closed and at rest. Accordingly, it is necessary to have the angled leading

edge exposed to granular material prior to it being moved from a closed to an open/partially opened position. Baltz does not disclose this limitation as the lip as seen in Figure 3 is underneath a seal 30A and therefore not exposed to granular material to help in assisting moving the gate from a closed to an open/partially opened positioned. Therefore, the rejection to claim 8 is respectfully requested to be withdrawn. As claims 10-11 depend from claim 8, these rejections should also be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 19, claim 19 requires angling downward "an angled portion of the leading edge of the gate away from the discharge opening whereby the weight force of the granular material acting on the angled portion will exert a horizontal component force on the gate in the direction of movement of the gate from the closed to the open position." The phrase open also includes the phrase "partially open" as defined in the Specification when discussing the contrast between Figures 2 (page 2, lines 28-29; page 6, lines 25-28). Baltz does not disclose this required limitation as it clearly places a lip, i.e. the equivalent to Applicant's leading edge, beneath the supports 30A in the closed position and therefore unable to assist in moving the gate from a closed to an open/partially open position. Therefore, this rejection to claim 19 should also be withdrawn.

Claim 23 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 24 which the Examiner had previously indicated would be allowable. Therefore, the rejection to claim 23 should be withdrawn. As claim 25 depends from claim 23, this rejection should also be withdrawn.

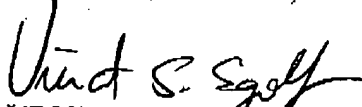
CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance, as they are patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

No fees or extensions of time are believed to be due in connection with this amendment; however, consider this a request for any extension inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 26-0084.

Reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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